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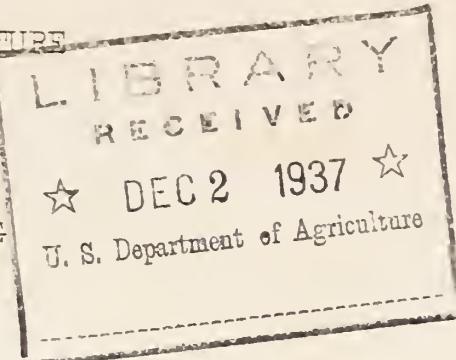
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF HOME ECONOMICS
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Reserve

ROAST TURKEY WITH SAVORY STUFFING



Selecting the turkey

Select a plump, well-fattened turkey, and find out whether it is a young or an old bird because this makes a difference in the way you cook it. For each person to be served, allow 3/4 to 1 pound in the weight of the turkey as you buy it. A 15-pound turkey makes about 20 generous servings.

Preparing the bird for roasting

In drawing the turkey, first cut the skin at the back of the neck, slip it down, and carefully remove the crop without tearing the outer skin. Then cut the neck off short, and save it for making broth to use in the gravy. Then make the cut across the lower part of the body no wider than necessary to draw the bird. Leave a band of skin and flesh under the tail so that the legs can be securely tucked in after the bird is stuffed. Save the giblets for the gravy. Cut off the oil sac on the top of the tail, and pull out the pin feathers with tweezers or a strawberry huller. Singe off the hairs over a flame quickly so as not to darken or scorch the skin.

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If the bird was carefully drawn, you will only need to wipe out the body cavity with a soft cloth wrung out of cold water. Scrub the outside with a wet cloth and a little soap or soda, or corn meal. Rinse off the outside quickly and wipe the bird dry outside and inside. Never let a turkey or any other poultry soak in water. You lose flavor and food value.

Stuffing and trussing

When you are ready to cook the turkey, rub the inside with salt, and fill the body cavity and the loose skin at the base of the neck with a hot savory stuffing (recipe below). Slip the crusty end slice of a loaf of bread into the opening near the tail to hold in the stuffing, tuck the legs under the band of skin, and sew up the slit with soft white twine. Fold the neck skin toward the back and fasten down with a skewer or stitches. Fold the wing tips under the back, and tie them down if necessary, but be careful not to run string across the breast for it will leave marks on the brown surface.

Then rub the stuffed, trussed turkey all over with salt and butter, and pat it with flour. Place back up and breast down on a rack in an open roasting pan. Lay a piece of the turkey fat over the back. Do not put any water into the pan. Water in a roasting pan makes steam, and steam around a roasting turkey or any tender meat draws out the juices.

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Roasting

Have the oven at a moderate temperature, 300° to 350° F. when you put the turkey in, and cook at moderate temperature all the way. Or, have the oven hot (about 400° F.) when you put the turkey in and after 20 or 30 minutes, reduce the heat quickly to very moderate (about 300° F.) and continue the cooking at this temperature.

For either method of roasting start the bird with the back up and breast down. Turn the bird every half hour, first from side to side, then on its back, then from side to side. Continue this method of turning until the bird is done. With every turn baste the bird with the pan drippings, or with melted butter or other fat. Be careful not to break the skin when turning. This "back-up" method allows the thighs to cook thoroughly without overcooking the breast.

For a young 10- to 12-pound turkey cooked at a constant moderate temperature of 300° F., allow about 15 to 18 minutes to the pound market weight (picked but not drawn and including head and legs). If using a hot oven at the start and a moderate temperature of 300° F. to finish, allow about 15 minutes to the pound market weight.

For a turkey a year or more old, cover the roaster and allow more time for cooking. It is not necessary to turn a bird in a covered roaster.

To test for "doneness", run a steel skewer or a cooking fork into the thigh next to the breast. If the meat is tender and the juice does not show a red tinge, the turkey is done.

Savory Stuffing

2 to 2-1/2 quarts dry bread crumbs	1 pint chopped celery
3/4 cup fat, butter and turkey fat	2 teaspoons salt
1 small onion, chopped	1 to 2 teaspoons savory seasoning
1/2 cup chopped parsley	Pepper to taste

In the melted fat cook the onion, parsley, and celery for a few minutes. Add the bread crumbs and seasonings and stir all together until the mixture is thoroughly heated. Pile the hot stuffing lightly into the turkey, but do not pack.

If desired, in place of some of the bread crumbs, use shelled nuts (chestnuts, hazelnuts, or filberts, pine nuts, almonds).

Giblet Gravy

Simmer the giblets (liver, gizzard, and heart) and the neck in 1 quart of water for about an hour. Drain the giblets and chop them fine. If there is too much fat on the drippings in the roaster, skim off some of the excess fat, and leave about 1/2 cup. Into these pan drippings, stir 4 level tablespoons of flour. Then gradually add the cool broth and enough more cold water to make a thin, smooth gravy. Cook for 5 minutes, add the chopped giblets, and season to taste with salt and pepper.